

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0020] as amended in the Response filed September 22, 2005 with the following amended paragraph:

[0020] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustration of an alternative embodiment information processing system 70, for example a backup system. The embodiment of FIG. 2 is substantially the same as the embodiment of FIG. 1 with the principal exception that the functions of the NIC, the disk driver and the device driver/bridge are integrated onto a single card/integrated circuit with an embedded processor. Referring to FIG. 2, this system includes a plurality of computing devices 72-75 that are interconnected via a packet switched data network 76. Each of the computing devices 72-75 communicates for example with an associated database management system (DBMS) and a file system. In this embodiment, each of the computing devices 72-75 includes an integrated interface card (IIC) 78-81, respectively, that handles input/output (I/O) between the associated computing unit and the network 16, and also I/O between the computing unit and an associated local disk ~~84-87~~ 30-33. Each disk (e.g., ~~84~~ 30) together with the disks in other the computing nodes (e.g., disks ~~81-83~~ 31-33) forms a distributed RAID, which appears to a user as a large and reliable logic disk space.